

Parental Notification Required for Title X

Abstinence Counseling also Required

Washington, D.C. - Today the U.S. House of Representatives voted to require that parents be notified before minors can receive federally-funded contraceptives. The House adopted the amendment offered by Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) by a vote of 224-200. The provision was included in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill for 1999. The amendment also requires abstinence counseling for minors seeking contraceptives.

The provision involves the program known as "Title X" (Title Ten) of the Public Health Service Act. The program provides federal tax dollars for contraceptives, treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases, and counseling on sex-related issues. Each year, approximately 1.5-million teenagers receive these services without their parents' knowledge. Additionally, reports show most teenage pregnancies are caused by adult men, not by teenage boys. Istook's provision also requires federal clinics to follow state laws by reporting adults who take sexual advantage of minors.

Congressman Ernest Istook (R-Okla.) says the Title X program currently undercuts parental guidance and involvement, but this language will help correct that. **"Schools can't give aspirin to a minor without a parents' okay, but Uncle Sam gives them birth control pills, and even controversial drugs, without letting the parents know. It's wrong to cut off parents from knowing about their child's health and conduct,"** said Istook. **"This program has been by-passing parents for decades, and we've seen the tragic results; it's time to respect the role of parents in raising their children."** Federal statistics show the out-of-wedlock birthrate for teens has doubled since Title X began in 1970. (Source: National Center for Health Statistics)

Istook also noted that the federally-funded clinics rarely or never report it when adult men are taking sexual advantage of teenage girls, despite state laws designed to protect minors. The provision requires them to follow such laws and notify authorities. This includes laws against statutory rape, molestation, child abuse, etc.

"This will prevent cases like the incident in Crystal Lake, Illinois," added Istook. **"A 37-year-old high school gym teacher took a 14 year-old student into a federally-funded Title X clinic to get contraceptive treatment for her, unbeknownst to her parents, so that he could continue to have sex freely with her. She was repeatedly injected with Depo-Provera—a controversial hormone with major side-effects, yet her parents were never notified."**

"The program encourages teens to have sex without expecting consequences," Istooks said. **"Essentially, our government is subsidizing teenage promiscuity. This measure takes a major step toward fixing that."**